

WASHINGTON, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1903.

"HOW I BEGAN MY CAREER"

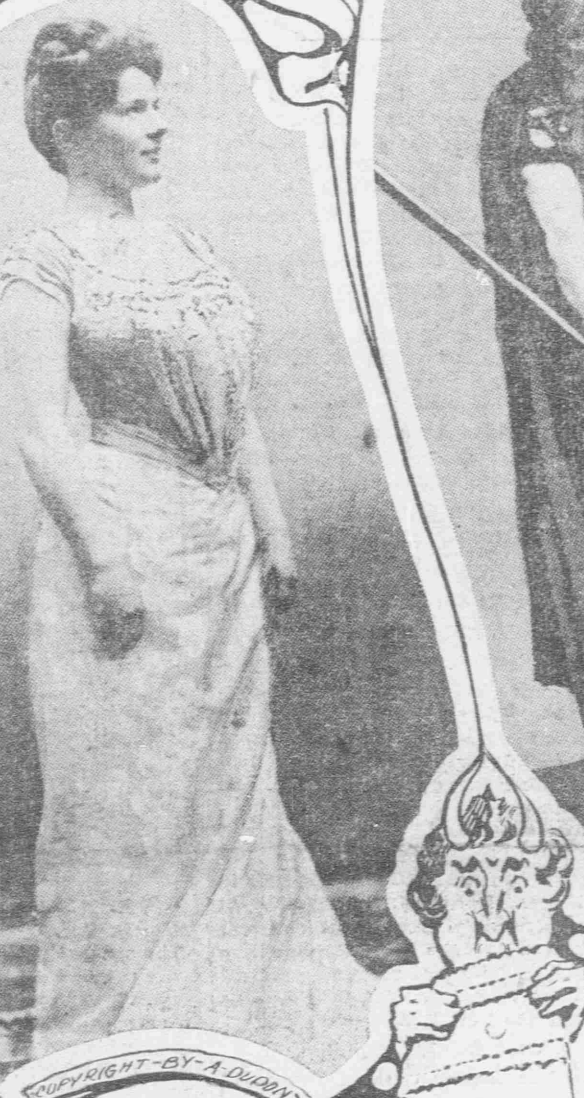
Alvarez a Band Leader in Bordeaux---Sembrich a Pianist.
Gilbert's Flight to Freedom---Gadski's Tears---Eames's
Song of Confucius --- Nordica's First Fee.



MME SEMBRICH



MME GADSKI



MME HOMER



HERR VAN ROOY



MME NORDICA



MONS ALVAREZ



MME EAMES



MR HERTZ



MME SEYGARD



SIGNOR SCOTTI



MME SCHUMANN



MONS GILBERT

cause of my boyish fondness for the church and its service that made me love this opera so much. For you know the old saying, I presume, that Gounod is ever standing with one foot on the stage, and the other in the chancel, and he is, always more dramatic in his church masses and more churchy in his operas.

"Well, to begin with, I was a chorister in the Cathedral in Bordeaux, and when I was seven years old learned to love music so well that I made up my mind to follow it professionally, and seeing no better way of advancement went into the town band, and when I was eighteen became its leader."

A Band Leader of Southern France.

"A sort of Bordeaux Duss," I interjected.

"Yes, just so, although I had no fortune to enable me to engage high priced singers and a Metropolitan orchestra."

"Well, I used to sing in the local singing society, the Orpheon, and once sang the principal role in a home amateur performance, and that ended my band practice forever."

"The stage, once trod upon, becomes a pretty powerful magnet, and I was not content until I had studied all my home conservatory had to teach me and found myself in this costume of Faust on the stage of the Lyons Opera. From there it was but a step to Paris and then America."

"But, they are calling me, monsieur, and I must be rude enough to ask you to excuse me, for I have a journey to take in the next act upon which I cannot ask you to accompany me—for only two horses are provided and I must ride with my friend Mephistopheles to Hades. Au revoir, monsieur."

Marcella Sembrich's Versatility.

"My operatic fate was not decided until a long time after I had entered music professionally," said Mme Sembrich. "You know I am nothing if not versatile. I play the violin, I play the piano, I sing and occasionally I drum."

"As a violinist I had appeared in many places and was on a tour as a solo pianist when I met the Abbe Liszt. I played to him, of course, and then some one present suggested that as I had a voice he might wish to hear me sing, and I sang, when judge of my astonishment to be taken by both hands and told:

"My dear child. The piano is not your best medium. Your musical gift is in your throat. Sing, always sing—and I have been singing ever since."

And la diva gave an example of what she meant by singing. Those of us who remember Mme Sembrich's first season will bear in mind her versatility as violinist and pianist as well as vocalist. But it is to the more recent operators that she has exhibited her powers as a drummer. As the Daughter of the Regiment she drummed her way into our hearts as surely as she ever made her way vocally, whether it be as Violetta, Mimi, Juliette or any other of the long list of characters she has made live before us.

Gilbert and His Puritan Home.

Charles Gilbert is a true child of Paris. Born and brought up in the city of pleasure, he was taught by his parents to think that music and the drama were the two great inventions of the evil one. No Puritanical New England home could have made these pleasures more forbidding.

In vain were threats, pleadings, offers of all kinds. Young Charles had made up his mind that singing and comedy were the two chief joys of life, and, struggle against them as he would, he was forced to surrender at last.

There was a stormy scene at home, a flight and the lad lost a home and the conservatoire won a pupil, and one, too, that was destined to bring no end of credit upon it and its professors.

I Must Sing or I Must Burst.

"I felt that I would burst if I could not sing," says M. Gilbert. "In no other way could I exist. I sang all the time—on the street, in my room, in my sleep, even—and only found happiness when I actually found the gates of the conservatoire clang behind me and knew that I had an opportunity at last to sing, sing, sing to my heart's content."

How well the lad improved his time is shown by the prize that he received and the commendation for hard work given him at the end of his two years' course.

"I was nineteen years of age when I entered the company of the Opera Comique, and how happy I felt when

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By FREDERIC DEAN.

"It is the beginning that counts," says the Brahmin philosopher.

"Be but directed aright and all impetus will be toward the required goal," and Horace adds:

"He has half the deed done who has made a beginning." It is always interesting to know how the start was made in any career, particularly in the lives of those who are in the fierce glare of present public fame.

Accounts of what our operatic artists do in public and in private are seized upon with great avidity. And it has been thought that the story of the beginnings of these artists, the starts made by them, when and how and why, would be received with favor.

Christine Nilsson was a peasant, Italo Campanini a hackdriver. Who

and what were our present-day favorites, our Nordicas and Sembrichs, our Van Rooy and Scottis?

Monsieur Alvarez, in the garb of Marguerite's lover, was caught as he was leaving the stage of the Metropolitan after the third act of "Faust."

"Ah! This opera always carries me back to the beginning of things. It was my first role. Care to hear about it? Come to my dressing room."